

Apocryphus Woods



IN THE WORLD OF
DARKNESS

ISSUE 1

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the first issue of Apocryphus Woods! It is a brand spanking new fan webzine for White Wolf's World of Darkness role-playing game. I was surprised that this had not been done (to my limited knowledge) for their new game, or as far as I can tell their past incarnation. I am excited to be heading this up, and I hope that it will grow to bring you quality modules for your game throughout the year.

We are starting with five broad columns. **Chatton's Toolbox** will contain many of the character crunch that you can use for your character or to throw at your players. In this issue we have a new look at the Contact Merit, a Gift List for Werewolf: the Forsaken, and a new ghost Numen. **World As Myth** is a column that takes elements from other areas of imagination and looks at it through the stained lens of the World of Darkness; Neil Gaiman's Underside will debut the column for us. **Searching the Depths** grabs some interesting bits that have been thrown around on the various forums that gamers inhabit. Rumors abound this issue.

Next we have a series of Fiction that will give you some haunting thoughts to chew on through the night. Finally, if that weren't enough, we bring you some denizens of the World of Darkness to inhabit your game and bring interesting new players into the stories that are told.

We are very excited about this and hope to continue this webzine for a long time. We'll need your help. Please e-mail comments to apocryphuswoods@gmail.com. Also we will need fan submissions to continue the life of this magazine; new blood always instills tons of energy into things. Look at Next Issue to see what we are looking for. And, of course we want to hear any way you have used the material for your game, even if you ganked it, shredded it, and rewrote it. We want to hear!

Hope you enjoy our very first issue,

Apocryphus Woods Staff

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Chaffin's TOOLBOX

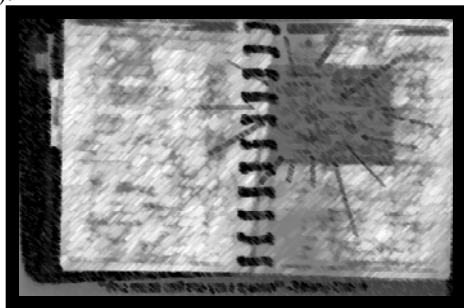
ALTERNATIVE MERITS

CONTACTS (• TO •••••)

Effect: Contacts provide your character information in a particular area of awareness. This Merit may be purchased multiple times to dedicate individual Merits to one area of awareness (e.g. police, underground, law, engineering). For instance a Private Investigator might have Contacts (Police) and Contacts (News). Contacts can include individuals whom the Storyteller defines, but the Merit portrays an undefined array of people from whom your character can draw information with a phone call, email or face-to-face query. The Contacts Merit is strictly for information gathering. Each dot indicates the reliability of the acquired information. Contacts do not come perform services for your character or rush to his aid. Those actions are the focus of other Merits such as Allies and Retainer.

The use of the Contacts Merits can be complicated. Extremely specific questions might not be within the knowledge of the Contact at all. The Storyteller is perfectly justified in saying that a particular contact just does not know. Success also does not guarantee that the question will be answered; it does assure that additional knowledge will be gained to solve the question. Exceptional success will generate extremely helpful knowledge if the contact has the requisite knowledge.

Gaining information from contacts requires a successful Manipulation + Persuasion or Socialize roll, depending on the relationship between your character and the people in question. Each dot in a Contacts Merit adds a bonus die to this roll. Penalties may apply if the information sought is not generally known by the contact (-1 to -3), confidential (-3), or if sharing it could get people in trouble or harmed (-3 to -5).



GIFTS

FINANCE GIFTS

A werewolf needs money to survive just like anyone. For one of the Uratha (or even worse, a Pure One) to hold down a day-job just does not work. Spirits start to pester them at work. And what happens if they get frustrated in cubicle world? It is much simpler for an Ithaeur to make overtures to a greed, money, or finance spirit; a simple walk to a casino or ATM is all that is usually needed to start negotiations. A pack with the knowledge of these Gifts will be much better off for it.

PAN HANDLE (•)

This Gift turns the age-old art of begging into a profitable endeavor. The werewolf sits down at a street corner and the passers-by seem to want to empty their pockets onto the Gift-user. After just an hour there will probably be enough money to live decently (for someone without a job) for a couple of days. One use of the Gift takes about three hours for fruition of the full benefit.

Cost: 2 Essence

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Wisdom

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Someone alerts the cops who come to harass or arrest the werewolf.

Failure: The werewolf gets a few bucks, enough to buy a coffee and hot dog but not much else.

Success: The character receives a couple hundred bucks, mostly in bills.

Exceptional Success: The character has chosen to sit at quite profitable spot: a recent daily lottery winner or big wig banker drops a nice wad in the pot. The character receives over a thousand dollars.

CREDIT GLITCH (••)

Sometimes a little more than a couple hundred dollars is needed to satisfy the werewolf's needs. The powerful spirits that are linked to the transfer of money know one important fact: the system can soak a lot of damage. They pass on this knowledge when teaching this Gift although most the time it is lost in translation. The Uratha must have a credit card; a demagnetized one will work fine. The Gift must be used before the merchant attempts to make the credit transaction. After the Gift is used, the effect lasts for about an hour. The Gift affects the lines of credit and makes it appear to the merchant that the transaction

has proceeded as normal. The merchant will get its money from the credit card company and the credit card company will think that it had the balance paid.

Cost: 4 Essence

Dice Pool: This power requires no roll.

Action: Reflexive

For purposes of one transaction the Uratha will have Resources 3. The transaction cannot be tracked by any means. If, for instance, a car is bought while using this Gift, an investigator might find something interesting only if he is looking specifically at how the car was paid for. This Gift does not help the werewolf trick the merchant into believing he is the credit card holder, therefore using a credit card that the werewolf can back up with identification is useful.

IDENTITY THEFT (•••)

Major financial transactions now require a buyer to produce multiple forms of personal identification in order to complete the exchange. An Uratha might have trouble buying a large tract of land or contracting a “solid” home to be built when forced to show proof of citizenship, good standing with taxes, or even something as simple as health insurance. With this Gift the werewolf appears, for the duration of one transaction, to be who he says he is. He must have a personal article of the person he is trying to be, but otherwise everything else appears to be in order, even the general identity’s appearance. All credit cards on the werewolf seem to be the stolen identity’s. Blank pieces of paper will appear to be birth certificates, social security cards, and letters of reference. And any online credit that the stolen identity has will be available through the Gift’s effects. Note that the change in appearance is not flawless. The werewolf will gain enough similarities that a businessman will not notice, but a personal acquaintance to the stolen identity will probably notice. This Gift will not change a werewolf’s gender.

Cost: 2 Essence, 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Empathy + Cunning

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The business, or person, goes into emergency “wanted felon” mode to alert security services and the authorities.

Failure: The salesperson believes who your character says they are, but the documents (or online approval) are not in order. The salesperson cannot legally proceed with the transfer.

Success: The transaction goes through quickly and painlessly.

Exceptional Success:

The effect of having the stolen identity will last for an hour after the transaction.

ADVERSE POSSESSION (••••)

The things of most value in this world are those things that can only be owned by title: real estate, stocks, and even patents or copyrights. Any squatter can “claim” a building, but the government and financial institutions will believe otherwise. A werewolf

with this Gift takes the title to certain pieces of property. The Gift will change the owner of the title, past records of ownership, utility bills, and every financial record to show that the Gift-user is and has been the owner. Legally it will seem as if the prior owner had only obtained it by mistake.

Anything can be obtained this way as long as there are concrete financial records claiming ownership. Wise Uratha are very cautious in using this Gift and make sure to do ample research into the property they are acquiring. Taking title to a 10-year old chemical factory will attract much unneeded attention and probably end up poorly for the werewolf (corporations and lawyers can make a crippling combination). Taking title to a decrepit warehouse, on the other hand, would probably not even raise an eyebrow.

Cost: 6 Essence

Dice Pool: This power requires no roll.

Action: Instant

Your character will legally become the owner to a certain piece of property whose ownership can be proven by financial records and documents. The changed documents will show that your character has been the owner, or in the chain of ownership, for a reasonable time as to discredit the current owner. Taking certain properties may make your character many enemies very quickly.



DEPRIVATION (•••••)

In the current age, one of the most crippling injuries is to be cut off from available finances. A restaurant can go into the red for that month just because its credit card machine was not working for a few days, or someone might have to head into a life of crime for a weekend because their food-stamp card was demagnetized. An Uratha will have many enemies and rivals that rely on the financial web. For instance, a vampire elder might not have any financial records, but her ghoul family will. The Gift affects the target in every way in which the target's financial stability is connected to the web of information. The credit cards will all show "DENIED" when used, but the last non-effected credit card bill that came by mail could still show a holder in good standing. The effect of this Gift is not irreversible; a target who acts quickly and carefully can recover with little loss. Most of those affected do not know what hit them until it is far too late.

A few examples of how the target would be affected. Mortgages will show that they are long overdue and that the mortgage company can begin foreclosure proceedings. Banks will show a balance in the negative. Credit cards will not work. Title to any stocks will contain errors that the company will take advantage of. Bonds will contain records that they have already been cashed. All in all, except for cash and material worth (and even that can be tricky), the target is deprived of modern finances.

Cost: 5 Essence, 1 Willpower, 1 Health Level (Aggravated)

Dice Pool: This power requires no roll.

Action: Instant

Your character must know the full legal name of the target and speak that name several times into a phone while the Gift is being activated. This takes about three minutes. As the Gift begins to change records in the financial web, the phone will become unbearably cold eventually causing an aggravated health level of damage. If the phone is dropped or if the phone becomes disconnected, the Gift fails to completely work, but the Gift may have changed a few financial records. Success means the target will be deprived of any financial means and could possibly be forced in to bankruptcy or arrested. If the target realizes what has happened, he can take quick legal action to curb some of the damage. Even with quick action, most of the effects will be felt for years by the affected.

GHOST NUMINA

MIND ITCH

Effect: A ghost with this power may never be found by ghost investigators. It does not have the in-your-face presence of candlesticks flying across the room, nor does it have the surrealistic impressions of taking over someone's body. The only thing Mind Itch does is attract people to an Anchor with a specific instinctive motive. This motive usually contains an action and a target. For example, a very old ghost may use Mind Itch to lure innocents with an impulse to help someone trapped in its haunted house (*help visitor*) only to ensnare the innocents when they arrive and find no one. Younger ghosts who only have this Numen can wait until a trespasser appears near their Anchor and call people to come attack him (*hurt trespasser*). Use of this Numen requires a Power + Finesse roll and costs two Essence. The motive must be decided prior to the use of the Numen, and be easily relatable through a simple verb and noun. The affected will have the overwhelming need to visit the anchor, although they may not normally do what the ghost wants acting in regards to their instinctual motive. The range of the Numen is about five miles and will not specifically target any person.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Most of the people in range get a vision of the area around the ghost's Anchor and the feeling of a supernatural presence there.

Failure: No one responds.

Success: A few people respond. For the first few minutes of the affected's arrival there is a mob mentality to accomplish whatever the emotion demands.

Exceptional Success: The type of people that the ghost wanted to come arrive. An example would be rival gang members arriving with the 'hate' emotion to see their enemies shooting up heroin.

Suggested Equipment: Heavily populated areas (+2), homeless or uneducated abundant (+1)

Possible Penalties: Rural areas (-2), business hours (-1), difficult location (-1)



WORLD AS MYTH

UNDERSIDE — A MYTH FROM NEIL GAIMAN'S NEVERWHERE

The world forgets some people. It is not intentional; the person's life just falls through the cracks of fate into the Underside. To call it another layer of the onion would be an overstatement; Underside is a small unnoticed blemish. There are cracks throughout the world, but there are five Underside populations of particular note: London, New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Calcutta. Each Underside populous has its own culture, rules and societies, but they all share one thing in common: the world does not care about them.

Slipping through the cracks is not a common thing; reality has laws. It usually happens when a person is not where they are supposed to be, is not in the matter of the world, and most importantly is somehow affecting Underside. The first element is easy to realize. All it takes is for someone to duck down a long stairwell or explore the far-reaching root cellar under the neighborhood haunted house. They would be considered to be in the real world, but also in a place the Underside touches. This acts as a natural buffer between the two realms. Getting out of the fate of the world altogether is a little trickier. To slip between the cracks, a person cannot usually be in contact with anyone in the general populous. If someone will immediately know that the person has gone missing, that person is not going anywhere. A sewer worker that goes down a tunnel, apart from the team, when he is "on the clock" and in radio contact to search for a leak will not find Underside. A sewer worker that stays after hours to continue to search after his team has left, has turned off his distracting radio, and has no one to go home to except the cat might indeed fall into Underside depending on how far he goes. The third element is the kicker: the world does care about people. They are part of things and if people started falling through the cracks left and right, the world itself would start falling apart. Mostly this means that the stronger a person's web of contacts to others, the less likely that he or she will go through. A loved family man has about a zero chance of becoming an Undersider, a bachelor with a girlfriend and work friends might, and a homeless man with no relatives has a very good chance.

The culture of the Underside seems like a throw-back to earlier ages. There are people of every walk of life in a very brutal culture. The barbaric nature and the level of concern for others' welfare would

scare most normal people into shock. (Werewolves would seem to be right at home but are disturbed for other reasons.) Like a prison, finding a group of people is necessary for survival. To call the Underside a fragmented society is a sore understatement. The groups usually follow a way of life since wealth and ethnicity rarely matter anymore. The Rat Speakers serve the rats of Underside and are central to the passing of information. Sewer Folk generally smell bad and collect things that hitch a ride in the waste systems of the cities. Nobles hold a constant court for no one but themselves and their followers (which are few), and The Rex maintain control of the books for the indentured servants and who comes to the Floating Market.



With the low worth of a person's life, it can be easy to imagine a lawless region where only the strong survive. Yet, even the strongest are not out of reach of retribution for wrongs committed. The most socially suicidal act is to break a deal or welsh on a

debt or favor owed. Underside runs on favors; they are the currency. Unlike the Kindred, the disclosure of favors owed is as common as trading away favors that are owed by others. If someone comes to another claiming that they control a favor owed by a third party, it is taken as truth; to lie about such a

The Floating Market

A Floating Market is a simple concept. Every month at a new location a sprawling market is held. The location is spread by word of mouth and it is considered bad etiquette among the social leaders to be the last to know its whereabouts. There are a multitude of vendors, contests of every sort abound, and the gossip is thick as honey. An engorged capitalism not stymied by the ethics of modern society, course through Underside. One can buy everything: information, illicit substances and objects, and even slaves (although indentured servitude is a more appropriate term).

The first law governs the passing of information regarding the Floating Market. People cannot disclose false information about the location of the next Market. They feel compelled to tell the truth and to pass the information on. The most interesting thing is that people forget who told them the next location within a few hours, and no one cares. It is very easy to find out where the months' Floating Market will be, and the night it is happening it is almost impossible not to know.

The second law is the most simple and the most harsh. Do not harm another. Those that break the rule are unlikely to survive the night. There is no security at the Market, the people there are the judges, jury, and executioners. Harm can be something as blunt as an assault and battery, pick-pocketing, or a supernatural ability like a curse. The punishment usually is befitting of the crime: knock someone out with haymaker, get beaten to near death; steal something, get stripped of earthly possessions; supernaturally affect someone in a detrimental way and get killed. It is not as if everyone in the Market immediately turns on the perpetrator, but enough people act that the punishment gets handed down swiftly.

The third law keeps the Market going. Every transaction is binding. The market-goers may try and haggle their way to the best deal possible, but they won't lie or cheat their way into a bargain. Those that are foolish enough to do so are exiled from the Market after a "payment" has been given to the aggrieved party.

thing would be unthinkable. The first punishment is usually being kicked out of the social group. One can return to a trust-worthy position with a lot of work and favors. Further infractions create more enemies and a lower value on the perpetrator's life. Except for the stated principle of favors a pragmatic natural law, objectively derived from the nature of human beings, is in full effect. If someone was murdered, the first thing that runs through an Undersider's head is that they probably deserved it. No one makes a habit of unjustified murder, though, because no one wants the whole of Underside against them.

Most Undersiders also have what they call "Knacks," another reason to be cautious when in the Underside. A Knack is a supernatural power each with its own very specific use. A few examples are: telekinesis of weapons, siphoning of life, knowing what is going to float down the sewer, or even just being able to jump higher. Most Undersiders have one simple Knack, and only the most powerful have more than one.

SYSTEMS

Adventure into Underside can be scary to humans and absolutely terrifying to any supernaturals not accustomed to the change in reality. First, an upsider has to find it.

UNDERSIDER OBSERVATION

Noticing an Undersider can be a feat. People just don't pay attention to them. Undersiders do not try and hide or avoid notice, although most appear to be homeless and society would probably try and avoid them anyway. All Undersiders are below notice to the world, and therefore becoming aware of them and maintaining that awareness is impossible for most.

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure + Supernatural Inherent Power (Blood Potency, Primal Urge, etc.)

Action: Reflexive

Your character must be actively looking for an Undersider or the Undersider must be doing something that would normally attract notice in order for the character to maintain awareness of the Undersider. An example would be an Undersider walking around at a very private social gathering or two of them having sex at a bus stop. Your character must want to keep noticing the Undersider otherwise the fact that a person is there just slips from your character's mind.

Once your character has gained awareness of the Undersider he must consciously maintain it unless the Undersider wishes to converse with him. If your character becomes distracted for even a few seconds while watching an Undersider, he loses the awareness.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Your character believes that there is nothing unusual about the Undersider, and furthermore if your character has belief in Underside it is forgotten for a day.

Failure: Nothing to see here, move along.

Success: Your character notices the Undersider (although not necessarily for being one) and can pursue him or her.

Exceptional Success: For a full minute your character is aware of the Undersider regardless of any distractions that would tear his attention away from the Undersider.

Possible Penalties: In a crowd (-2 to -4), other matters on your character's mind (-1), in combat (-3), in an area populated with homeless (-3)

UNDERSIDE EFFECTS ON SUPERNATURALS

The first thing that supernatural creatures notice when they enter Underside is that their source of power seems to be greatly lessened. Further, the more powerful the supernatural creature is the more they are affected by Underside's refusal of their powers and its protection of its citizens. Storytellers can choose any or none of these effects that Underside has, although the more that are used, the more disturbing it will be to the creatures that stumble upon this hidden world.

- No Essence may be gained by ghosts or spirits while in Underside. The sole exception to this is when a ghost's Anchor is a part of Underside. Needless to say spirits and ghosts try and stay away from Underside as much as possible.
- Drinking an Undersider's blood confers one-fourth the benefit of drinking a normal human's blood. A vampire will gain the Undersider Merit for eight hours if she drinks an Undersider's blood.
- A werewolf or mage subtracts their Primal Urge or Gnosis, respectively, from the dice roll whenever they attempt to use Gifts or magic.
- Undersider's are not effected by Lunacy.
- Undersiders do not cause Paradox rolls when they witness covert spells.
- Any supernatural power affecting anyone with the Undersider Merit has a 4-die penalty. The only exception is the use of Knacks.



NEW MERITS

UNDERSIDER (●●●)

Effect: Your character becomes a part of the Underside. She will be able to notice other Undersiders and entrances to the Underside. She will be able to join a social group residing in Underside (impossible to do without the Merit), and within a couple months of surviving as an Undersider your character will start to slowly form a Knack.

Drawback: The real world will ignore your character. First, electronic and mechanical devices refuse to function for her as if she was doing something incorrect to the device. A car for which the Undersider has the key will refuse to start, or an online bank account will refuse to be accessed. The second and most noticeable change is that people without the Undersider Merit will ignore and forget your character. They will talk to your character if they are pestered, and they will defend themselves if attacked, but largely, Undersiders will be ignored and forgotten. For most purposes your character's Social Merits will cease to exist as a result of these drawbacks; it is up to the player and the Storyteller to decide any effects relating to loss of those Merits (especially experience points).

UNDERSIDE RESOURCES (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Newly initiated Undersiders will find that their prior earthly possession fade away very quickly (even more quickly if they are in an electronic form). They will also find that all their PDA's, portable music players, and laptops are worth exactly nothing at Floating Market. Underside operates instead on favors and *stuff*, not quite salable goods but not quite trash. Favors range from small favors for information to big ones involving dangerous tasks. Stuff has a more widely varied range of worth – a handkerchief found left behind at a bus station might be worth a rat burger, but a used handkerchief of one of the Underside's elite could be worth a big favor. Without spending the experience to get Underside Resources your character gets by, but has a hard time when things get tough.

- A couple of small objects or a few small favors, enough to get small help when in trouble
- Enough stuff to get what you need at Floating Market and possibly a tradable favor
- A decent stall could be set up at Floating Market and a few tradable favors are kept
- Renown for the amount of stuff owned and some of the favors you hold are sought after
- Getting what you desire is rarely a problem

Searching the Depths

RUMORS IN THE FASHION OF UNKNOWN ARMIES FROM RPG.NET

RUMORS FROM THE REQUIEM

If you do really bad things for a really long time, at first you get all corpse-like, but then, if you keep it up, you start getting normal again, except then you live by this vampiric code of behavior that lets you feed as much as you like. [DannyK]

Before New Coke, vampires could drink Coca-Cola and it'd nourish them like blood does. When Coca-Cola Classic launched, it didn't work anymore. No shit. The vampires who date back to before New Coke don't talk about it, though. [Stephens]

You remember that point when you were Embraced and you blacked out and you were dead for a few seconds? Yeah . . . you didn't actually get back up. Somewhere out there is the world you died in, and all the people you knew and friends you had are still there. You're somewhere else now. That's why your memories of things are different when you come out of torpor. You remember the living world -- this dead vampire world is the one that's fucked up. [Jess Heinig]

There are Vampire Hunters out there who detect Vampires by the rate they blink - catching those who don't blink enough, or blink too much. I'd start practicing if I were you. [Shining Dragon]

Never hunt at Walmart. Walmarts are alive. They are these huge malevolent spiritual predators, and they fucking hate vampire competition. You know that dazed look people walking out at 2 in the morning have? That's because the store ate a piece of their soul. If you're good enough with Auspex, and you look at a Walmart, you'll go batshit insane. [BailyWolf]

There are no Kindred in Hawaii. And I don't buy that crap about 'Pele the Goddess' protecting her island or whatever. I just think anyone smart enough to survive the trip is too smart to want to live on a volcanic island. [GregStolze]

RUMORS FROM THE FORSAKEN

Humans have been on the moon, and neither the Mother nor Lunes could do anything against it. Y'know what I think? Luna's dead. [Wyrn]

There are certain times when you absolutely must not howl at the moon. You'll know 'em when you see 'em. Don't ask me why. [Ferrinus]

There is a special number that you can dial into a pay phone to open a gateway into the Shadow. The number's different for each phone, but once you've found it, it works every time. One way only, though. I can't say why it works, but my packmate thinks it's because of something big that's grown in our phone lines. And for some reason, it likes us in the Shadow. No, I'm honest. Here's the number for the phone in the corner. Try it out. [beachfox]

You know how there're are always rumors of other guys, not Pure or Forsaken? Well, I met some of them. Weirdos bound to the Sun, not Luna. Then there were these other guys, bound to the stars. Said that while Luna or Helios could each grant huge blessings, the Stars granted thousands upon thousands of small blessings. They were weird, though. Gotta think long and hard about suns so very far away, and what kind of spirit they must have...'cause these star worshippers were weird, man. Some of there older ones were mutated and deformed, and I caught a glimpse of a totem, once...something that freaked me right the hell out.. [Professor Phobos]

There's a point, right at sunset or sunrise, when the sun flashes green - that, my friend, is a brief glimpse of Pangaea, where it still exists, right on the edge of one day and the next. It doesn't happen every day - it has to be dead still, all the way to the horizon, but if you're ready for it, you can move straight into that perfect world. You'll know how when you see it. [candaon]

RUMORS FROM THE AWAKENED

The Awakened never appear in mirrors. Ever. That thing staring back at you isn't your reflection. [Stephenls]

Most skeptic's believe today that Atlantis only existed inside Plato's head. Well I've heard that he's buried outside a ancient Smyrna in today's Turkey. If one could get something like a fragment of his dialogue Critias it could the sympathetic component needed to find his body. If you crack open his skull it is said that you can spy the ancient Atlantis! [Azidhak]

Atlantean runes drawn with silver permanent Sharpie markers are like ten times more potent than Atlantean runes drawn with anything else. [Stephenls]

Next time you drink a Coke check the can's reflection, there's Atlantean runes hidden in the cursive script. Every can's a different text. Every. Single. Can. [Rosencrantz]

That tungsten shit in your light bulb? The eyes of the Exarchs, I swear to god. They're watching all of us. They imbued the element with magical energy, full well knowing its capability as a lighting source. Go back to candles, it's the only way you're going to be safe. [LucitasBastardChilde]

You ever stood under a full eclipse of the sun boy? I did. And everything turned silent then. I mean, EVERYTHING. Animals. Insects. All of us watching. ... But also the sounds of the city. The rustling of the wind in the tree's leaves. All went silent. For a few moments, there was something around us. I felt chilly then. I think I felt the Abyss. And I think the planet felt it, too... [The_Sarge]



*I have Social Disease. I have to go out every night. If I stay home one night I start spreading rumors to my dogs.
- Andy Warhol*

SUNDAY NIGHTS WITH CHARLEY

A SHORT STORY BY MATT MOONEY

It was late Sunday night... well actually Monday morning... I was drunk because it was a three-day weekend, see, because of Labor Day. Well, anyway I was pissed at my friends about something and stormed off into the streets. (I probably just thought it'd be funny to have that bunch of drunks worried and whining about me). I was heading generally towards the river, or at least that was the idea. I'd get my bearings again when I hit the Landing and call a cab or something. But the route there from Washington wasn't nearly as short and simple as my sloshing synapses had lain out.

I tripped over something, and it cussed me out. Must've been a homeless person sleeping on the sidewalk, come to think of it. I couldn't really get a good look since I was suddenly busting ass into a dark alley. Smashed my head good on the jagged bricks of the stylish loft apartments it ran behind while I was at it. A puddle of something warm and slick wasn't at all helping me get back on my wobbly legs, and so it really seemed as good of a time as any to just pass out for a while.

It's kind of funny, but I knew right away that the sensation I felt as I was waking up was *gnawing*. Couldn't really describe it any other way, though it took a second to associate the sensation with my very own flesh and blood down there in the neighborhood of my left foot. Some dark steaming silhouette was hunched down there just having a hell of a time with my black leather Doc's. I think it heard me belch or something and it shuddered with a grunt. It stopped chewing and just started dragging me further into the alley.

Now let me tell you... the girls in the apartment next to me have a Newfoundland. If you don't know, that's a dog, a very **large** dog. They let this beast crap on the sidewalk, and they don't pick it up because they figure they can blame it on the horse-drawn-carriage-drawing-horses that go through our neighborhoods on the weekends. Ok? So this dog is this big, bigger than the little coeds who keep it and they swear it's their sweet little baby and he'd never harm a fly but I know, just *know*, that if this big bastard ever got rabies or just got spooked a locked door and pepper spray can't guarantee all my limbs stay attached.

So the only thing I can figure in my stupor is that my neighbors' big ass dog has finally got loose and wants to eat me. But, after a second or two my eyes

can come into focus and I finally realize the thing's not *biting* my ankle. No, instead my gut churns as I realize it's got a bony, hairy, dirty, leathery **hand** clamped on me.

So now I'm pretty frantic, trying to figure this out. The cobblestones are bruising my head and my ass, and my shirt's pulling up on my back letting all the slimy grime and broken glass in to sober me up real quick. I'm getting dragged down an alley by some cannibalistic crack-head who's grunting and slobbering and definitely smelling like shit. So I kick him, right, with my free leg and say something like, "Hey! Hey, pal, what's up?" as if we had just bumped into each other at the bus stop, without him trying to eat my foot or anything like that.

Well, he didn't like that at all. And this is where stuff goes *really* weird.

He stops, right, and I hear this deep growl. Not like an animal even, but definitely not like a man, and he turns around to look at me for a second. He's dragged me pretty far into the shadows now, so the streetlight is just barely shining on him and I can see is gray-white skin reflecting. I realize he's naked, but then all I can see is dripping teeth, burning eyes, and cracked yellow fingernails long as claws coming at my face.

The sound he made as he was lunging for my throat... I'll never be able to remember it, or reconstruct it in my mind... But I'll never be able to forget it for the same reason... it was just so... wrong... so horribly inhuman. It wasn't a sound any animal should make, it was like a mind or a soul *tearing* or getting torn apart by some lustful furious hunger. But it was cut short by the sweet little **ping** of an aluminum softball bat. The... thing... crumpled up by the wall a few feet away. I had to crane my neck to look up and see him, to see the black outline of his long coat, his weapon, and his outstretched hand.

I was pretty with it from that point on, thanks to the adrenaline, so I remember pretty clearly this guy helping me up and propping me against the wall. He asked me if I felt ok and if I could walk. But, he's not looking at me by the time he asks. He's walking back over to where the crack-head... thing... is crumpled against the other wall, and he's got his bat raised up in both hands like he's stepping up to the

plate. I know I said, "Yeah," but right before I could upchuck a "Thanks," he swings the damn bat down and crushes the thing's skull right into the freaking bricks! Man, I just spun around, and dry heaved and swore to myself that I did NOT just see that freak's head become concave.

"Think you can give me a hand with this?" asks my hero and my nausea is washed away by a fresh cold sweat.

I guess I couldn't really think of any convincing arguments to counter the gratitude I felt for this guy having just saved my life. And, I guess the bloody clump of hair pasted to the barrel of his shining silver cudgel was a pretty compelling reason to be as agreeable as possible. So I give him my coat when he asks for it. I help him wrap the freak in it and hoist the bastard up between us like he's our poor mate who's just too trash-faced to walk himself home. I walk with my savior and the freak wrapped in my coat with one of its arms around each of our necks. I can feel the thing's ribs jabbing in to me while I'm holding its arm up as we head down the darker streets of the city.

"Can't leave 'em laying around, obviously," says my hulking, smelling, skull-crushing hero while my eyes stay burrowed into the pavement passing under my lock-stepping feet (never ever peeking at the rotten carcass wrapped in my coat).

"Someone will find it. Cops are obliged to investigate. No one wants good folks like that getting into shit like this." A tug on my neck from the freak's limp weight let's me know that we're turning right at this corner, and my hero concludes, "Like when you kill a centipede in your bathroom. Can't just leave it there on the mat. You got to flush it!"

We're at the gates of the Metropolitan Sewer District water treatment plant when the thing in my coat becomes a heap on the ground and my hero's walking away fiddling with his key ring. The skin on this thing's legs looks leathery like a mummy's. Then a tiny cockroach crawls out from under a toenail and I'm doubled over dry heaving again.

"Whoa there, bud," says the guy while sliding a chain and padlock off the gate. "Hang in there, man, almost home."

He comes back over and I straighten up. "Oh yeah," he says, sticking out one hand and pocketing his keys with the other while the menacing bat hangs off his belt and his yellow teeth crack a wry smile. "Name's Charley." He thumbs at the dark vast lot of tanks, pipes, pumps, and vats and assures me, "It's okay. I work here."

I kind of went the rest of the way into autopilot at that point. My mind wasn't even paralyzed with terror any more, at least not as much. There just

wasn't any rational thing to do but pretend this wasn't all that horrifically strange and finish the disgusting task me and old Charley had been set on. We lugged the thing into the facility. We took it up a service stairway spiraling around the outside of one of the big churning vats full of sewage. We heaved it in.

"Oh hell, man," says Charley with remorse. "Could have kept your coat, I guess." My zombified shoulders give a shrug like "next time we'll know" as I just stare into the churning reeking slop.

"Yep, that'll do it," he says, dusting off his hands then lighting a cigarette. "The mixers and chemicals and enzymes and bacteria and what-not will chew him on up and process him out with the rest of the crap that goes through here. You know, the turds and rats and condoms and goldfish and whatever the hell else gets flushed."

Apparently at this point, Charley sees me wobbling there; ghost-white and drenched with sweat in the middle of December with no coat on.

"You okay?" he inquires. "You know," he says in all seriousness and points his cigarette at the murky water, "that was NOT a human being. I guess it used to be but not for God knows how long, man. I mean you get that, right?" I manage to point my dead eyes at him and give another humble shrug.

"Shit," he says, putting the cigarette in his mouth. He lopes over and grabs me before I topple into the vat. "Come on, let's get you a drink or something and just have you relax for a minute."

"So what do you do? I mean work," asks Charley as a shot of whiskey and a beer appear in front of me on the table. The old kitchen table's steel legs run down to the peeling green linoleum floor. The floor, in turn, spreads across the tiny kitchen from my shivering feet to the worn work boots holding up Charley. He leans against the white scratched cabinets, lights another cigarette and arches his eyebrows when my face rises to meet him. But my eyes can't help but keep drifting along the cabinets. Where they end and the living room apparently begins in this cozy one-room apartment. There, in that particular spot, leans the crimson-streaked Easton.

"So, uh... yeah" is about the best I can do in that stark moment. I shake off the last of my drunken stupor and push the shot away. For some reason I suddenly want nothing more than my sense and all my senses up and running at full steam. I manage to pull my eyes off the bat and back to its owner who was still waiting, curious, for my response. I resolve to get my wits back and keep them and start asking the questions that were just too scary up until then.

Specifically, "What the hell was that thing?" and, "Who the hell are you?" and, "What do you have to do with... them?" Everything about the situation has been nagging at me to accept the fact that this night has not been Charley's first such encounter.

Well, Charley, he just chuckles. He walks over and picks up the shot asks me if I'm sure I don't want it.

"It's about as good a way as any to make this stuff make sense," he says. I decline again, and he gives a shrug and throws it back.

"Well you saw what I do with them," he answers earnestly as he picks up my beer. "Just getting them off the streets. Got to flush out a nest of them sometimes," he explains as he takes another drag. Then with a swig from the bottle he says, "Been at it for about five years now. You just helped old Charley bag number thirty!" His toothy smile beams a tender slice of pride and appreciation at me as his beer raises in a little toast.

I jump up, then, and shake my head and said how it was crazy, or I was crazy, and Charley was definitely crazy. Eventually, in my ramblings I do manage to cover the big questions that were really chewing on my mind: What the hell are these things? What the hell are you doing running around bashing their heads in? What the hell are you thinking dumping them in the sewage treatment plant? Then again, I may have only gotten out, "What the hell?" and some spit.

"Well shit man," he says. "Your toes still tingling? They're freaking monsters, man! Honest to God bogeymen! They're all over crawling around the sewers and alleys just waiting to grab someone and *feed*." His good-old-boy demeanor starts to fade a bit as he tries to get it through my thick head. "They EAT people. It keeps them alive- well their bodies anyway. They got no soul, and not half a mind, but their body will keep on forever, I reckon."

His expression says he's just waiting for my next stupid question while he steps around the table to pick up my chair before returning to the kitchen sink to ash his cigarette. I do indeed ask next, "You mean... like zombies... or like... vampires?" and his rolling eyes let me know it's even more ridiculous than expected. But he just laughs again and takes another swig.

"No... no man," he says between chuckles. "No, I reckon vampires are much more with-it, if you know what I mean. They know well enough to live like a decent human being in between feedings." He puts down his beer, lights up another smoke and adds, "and zombies only do what they're told from what I understand. They ain't so pro-active and self-sufficient as these gamy bastards." I remember my

mouth falling open at this point in particular as I slump back into the chair.

"These freaks," he continues, more thoughtfully, "they live like rats." He takes a drag for punctuation and looks out the tiny dingy kitchen window. "Rats that fricking eat people."

He tries again to be hospitable and offer me everything from another beer to coffee to some warm milk. After I politely decline them he just shrugs and makes a final offer to call me a cab. I accept that even if Charley really is psychotic, he seems pretty intent on limiting his skull-crushing to the cannibalistic-weirdo demographic, and being generally nice to everyone else. I thank him as we part ways, and he just give another aw-shucks, "No sweat, man. You watch your ass out there, okay?"

My head lolls against the glass of the taxicab's back window as the last of my adrenaline fades into a sleepiness that's making things foggy again. But the hair on my neck pricks up as we whiz past the same alley I stumbled into earlier that night. I have just a split second to swear I see the dirty bare feet of some homeless (probably the one I tripped over) get pulled into the shadows under two big reflected points of hungry light.

I go downtown with my friends the next weekend after they hassle me enough. But, they wonder why I'm looking over all our shoulders the whole time we're walking from bar to bar, checking behind every dumpster, under every sewer drain. They wonder why I insisted on driving and made sure I had my golf clubs in the trunk of the car. "Because I don't play softball," I tell them. "O-o-o-o-kay," they reply.

We have an okay time, but needless to say I'm not really enjoying myself. At the night's third bar I decide to take my buzz and go for a walk. I'll make a detour by the car though, I figure. Actually, I think then, I don't like being downtown anymore and I just get the hell in my car and go home. The rest of the night and the next day I ignore the phone's ringing since I already know my friends are pissed and I'm an asshole and I owe Ted cab fare.

But I'm not worried about that. I'm not worried about anything except for dirty moldy people crawling around the shadows looking to make a chewy bloody feast out of anyone who wanders by.

Sunday night comes and I'm still in my boxers, still staring at the wall behind the TV. Suddenly I'm bolt upright and all but pissing myself over the *growl* I swear I just heard. It takes me a few panic-stricken split-seconds to realize it's just my stomach. I need to get the hell out my apartment and stop acting like such a weirdo. So I throw on some old cloths and

head downstairs. Double-stuffed tacos supreme are going to straighten it all out for sure, you bet.

But when I got outside I noticed something funny. Instead of pulling away from the curb I was staring into my trunk. I'd opened the trunk to check for my clubs without even thinking about it. I was confused and hungry but after I saw them I felt... resolved... too. So I shook my head clear and closed the trunk and hit the taco joint like I'd intended. I'd need my strength for the night ahead.

I cruise the main drag for a bit, wondering where to start. I scan the spaces between where the street lamp light falls, looking for glinting eyes or dripping fangs. I pull into some bank's lot to park and notice a particularly dank alleyway running between some old abandoned warehouses. I take one last deep breath and one last pull on my Mountain Dew, and pop the trunk. I'm trying to sneak down the alley quiet like a Navy SEAL or something, but my footsteps clatter and every bit of broken glass I crunch or bottle cap I kick skitters off in a million direction. And each time that happens sends yet another wave of goose bumps up my spine. My ears are straining my eyes are peeled and the caffeine in my system has got NOTHING on the pumping adrenaline right now.

And then my paranoia gets its fix. A grunt, and *definitely* a scurrying prick my ears from under that old truck-dock right next to me. I stop dead and just listen. I slowly turn my head and catch the tiniest, quietest *hiss* come from that dark space. Whatever it is, I figure I need to flush it out, right? So I step back and bend over to grab a broken brick to chuck in there.

I crouch down, keeping my eyes on the hole under the dock. I feel around a little for the brick and keep my 5-iron up in front of me. Of course, I can't find the damn thing and there's no sign of life in the darkness. I steal a glimpse at the ground and grab the brick, but she's on me before I can look back up. Snarling and thrashing she knocks me over and now she's trying to scrape my eyes out with her broken, rotting fingernails. As she shrieks her breath makes me gag, and the only other thing I can sense is her bony frame jabbing and jumping on all my limbs. I manage to get the golf club wedged between us and bring the broken brick smashing into the side of her sticky, yellow face. She hops back and I can finally get a look at the flailing mess that attacked me.

She couldn't have been ninety pounds. Hunched over like that was she hardly looked human at all. Her eyes were wide and white; her mouth a dripping maw of jagged teeth. With another rending screech she's lunging at me again. I'm still on my ass but I manage enough of a windup on my lucky number-five to send her rolling across the cobblestones.

Quicker than I ever thought I could be I was on my feet and just swinging that club as hard and as fast as I could. Awhile after she stopped twitching I finally dropped the club and just stood there panting in the cold night. Eventually I look up and at the end of the alley I see him there, long coat to the ground, silver bat glinting in the moonlight.

"Holy crap, man!" He guffaws as he jogs up to me. He hops over the corpse and slaps me on the shoulder with a beaming grin and beer on his breath. "I knew you were up for this work," he says and looks down at the thing I just reduced to pulp.

"Damn, that's a scrawny one... but then, they can be the meanest." I'm just trying not to pass out, and old Charley's ready and raring to go. He grabs the gnarly waiif's ankle.

"Come on," he says with a tug, "Let's toss her back under there for now. We can come back later with my truck."

When he looks up at me he must see the by now familiar expression of my horrified and boggled mind. A look of puzzlement crosses his face in response before he seems to realize just what's bothering me.

"Oh. Heh," he explains. "It was in the shop last week. Yeah, we don't have to drag the critters around every time." He drops the thing's leg and tosses the bat over his shoulder with a chuckle. "Ha! We sure as shit don't have time for that!"

He waves for me to help again, and I realize it's time to just swallow my doubt and my confusion, but keep my fear. I reckon that's something you can't do without when doing this kind of work. I find that resolve I felt before and help Charley drag the body back under the dock, consciously and deliberately this time. I'm doing this on purpose now.

"Yup," says Charley, dusting his hands in what must be a tiny ritual. "That'll do her for now. Come on, I'm pretty sure there's a nest over off Spruce." He smiles at me and with a happy punch to my shoulder admits, "I sure am glad you came back around. I swear they're getting out of hand, and we need all the help we can get."

Denizens of the Darkness

GHOST THE GOATMAN

Matt rolled into the grassy clearing in his high school graduation present. He had to slap his pledge brother Karl to get him out of his drunken stupor. The actives had said there wasn't much to this, just take a picture of one of the other pledges standing next to the bus. The last shot of five-dollar vodka that got them out here had just worn off, and things were starting to seem much less simple. Karl got out of the car with incoherent swearing at the actives, Matt, and the town for good measure. Matt handed off the maglite to his grumbling, stumbling pledge brother, and they started towards the ruined bus. The light didn't help as Karl preferred to wave the light into the trees instead of on the ground which was spotted with the small gravestones intent on tripping them up. Matt scolded Karl to stand next to the bus so they could take the picture and get out of there. Karl complied with a few crude poses while belting out their pledge song. Fiddling with the digital camera Matt managed to find his pledge brother in the view-finder. Karl stopped mugging suddenly as a look of recognition slowly crept up on his face. Something hard and fast cracked over the back of Matt's head and he crashed to the ground. He never saw Karl again.



Background: Along a rural highway road outside of a college town is a wrecked school bus not far off the road at the edge of a forest. Some of the local fraternities have their freshman drive past with a camera and take a picture from their car; after graduation the alumni of those fraternities scare themselves again by telling stories of their experiences. On closer inspection one can find simple, worn gravestones surrounding the school bus that lead further into the woods. The gravestones are at least a century older than the school bus. The area is full of trash and broken glass. This is where the Goatman resides.

The story changes with each telling but there are some basic components told by college students to the incoming freshman. A man was driving the school bus and crashed into a turn of the century graveyard. He hit his head or was insane and killed the remaining children waiting to go home from school, their bodies are buried in the old graves. He lived out there for months before the bus was found and he was shot and killed by the police. His ghost remains there still. The truth is far simpler: a burnt-out 40-something hippie fell asleep at the wheel of his traveling house-on-wheels and died as a result. His body wasn't found for weeks and the owner of the land has decided to forget about it. The ghost has

been there for 20 years and has transformed from a flower-child to a cynical murderer. The reason is unknown, but it possibly could be darker spirits or ghosts already residing in the forest or graveyard, the dark emotions that generations of college students have forced on the site, or just being alone.

The cycle is simple and true. Every 2-4 years some drunk college students go out to the bus, find there is nothing really scary, and start busting the area up. The lucky ones pass out. The Goatman does not lay a finger on any students, instead he uses his Numen

to "contact" some locals. The locals come out find some very drunk college students (who they despise) and beat them and take them away. Some wake up with a few broken bones in a ditch the next day or in a dumpster in town. A few accidents happen and some die and their bodies are not found for weeks far out in the vast forest. The Goatman rarely "contacts" the same locals and most locals don't have stories about the abandoned school bus. The college students stories renew and refresh and after a few semesters pass into legend, and the dares start up again.

Description: The Goatman manifests only when there is a severe dry spell of college-student curiosity. His face is elongated with a severe overbite, and the Goatman's hair is so thick and unkempt that when it is swept back it gives the slight appearance of horns. A seriously hunched back completes the picture.

Storytelling Hints: The Goatman is as much of a puppeteer as his intellect and locale allows. Most of the time, he just watches. He watches the bikers and trucks go along the country road, the seasons change, and sometimes hunter going through the woods. He cycles from curiosity to boredom to cynicism, and at the peak of the cycle is when the Goatman calls. The Goatman is very careful around those that seek out his anchor; especially if he feels any power in them.

Story Seeds:

- A townie, Fred, was linked to the murder of a college student to the point of fingerprints and DNA. Fred remembers drinking heavily on a Friday night and getting the urge to go vandalize something at the bus. Then it all becomes a blur until he had to go into Walmart to work the next morning. Three different State psychiatrists examined Fred before his murder trial and they all concluded that Fred did not have a recollection of that night. The physical evidence was overwhelming at the trial, but the jury hung itself three separate times because a minority of the jurors could not believe it beyond a reasonable doubt. Fred was released from custody on a limited probation after the third trial.
- The Goatman's haunt is occupied by other forces that start troubling the ghost to no end. He starts using his Numen to try and call people that will help him by ridding his anchor of the other infestation. The people come confused as to the reason for finding themselves there and fall prey to the occupying forces machinations. The cycle gets worse as the Goatman gets more desperate.
- A fraternity takes the Goatman legend a few steps too far. They begin to venerate the bus and perform vigils and initiations at the crash site. One of the actives starts dating a Wiccan and

gets interested in some of her crazy books. He decides the fraternity will sacrifice a goat the next time they hold a meeting out there. Most actives opt out of this one, but a few curiously tag along with the nervous pledges forced to go. They get drunk, have a campfire, and very unceremoniously kill the goat. Nothing really happens, and they burn the goat carcass. The next morning they take the goat's skull back to the fraternity as a token of their stupidity; the Goatman finds that he has gained another anchor centered on fraternity row.

Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 3, Resistance 4

Willpower: 6

Morality: 3

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Corpus: 9

Numina: Mind Itch (dice pool 5)

UNDERSIDER

VARNEY

Quote: "Put it like this. If you can cut someone with it, blow someone's head off with it, break a bone with it, or make a nasty hole in someone with it, then Varney's the master of it."

Background: Varney is the epitome of big and dumb. In fact, many Undersiders wonder if Varney represents the missing link between ape and human. He actually became an Undersider by accident. Varney ran in to trouble with a gang of Irish gypsies and was beaten to unconsciousness and dumped into the sewer system. The Sewer Folk fished him out and rescussitated him (a taste he will never forget). By sheer force of will (and anger) his Knack developed in under a week and he became known for his bullying and beatdown tactics. He quickly carved out a living as a bodyguard, eventually one of the best in London Underside. Poor Varney's head eventually went under water when the focus of Underside's best assassins trained on him. They left him for dead and mangled beyond recognition, but his Life was being held by the Sewer Folk. Much to his luck he was brought back to life, yet again, by the Sewer Folk, only this time they required more definite payment. He is now their personal bodyguard (as if their smell wasn't enough) and will be for a very long time.

Description: A tall Scotsman with a grizzled face and constant snarl. Varney has numerous scars all over his thick, hairy body. With his size and gruff voice he can usually intimidate any wannabe-thieves before anything gets physical.

Storytelling Hints: Varney is basically an animal. He thinks in terms of fight, eat, sleep, flight - usually in that rough order too. Even when faced with a physical threat, such as a raging werewolf, Varney is more likely to pull out his Knack and go to town than not. In conversations he is unusually curt and gruff, and unless he is working as a bodyguard for the person talking to him, continued conversation will usually lead to a brawl. He rarely uses his Knack to assassinate, preferring to actually fight.

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Skills: Crafts (Melee Weapons) 3, Occult 1, Athletics 1, Brawl (Punch) 4, Firearms 1, Weaponry (Blunt Weapons) 4, Survival 1, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Fighting Style: Boxing 1, Fighting Style: Kung Fu 2, Giant, Iron Stomach 2, Undersider 3, Underside Resources 1

Willpower: 7

Morality: 5

Virtue: Fortitude. Varney will not give up in a fight. If he gets knocked down or things are looking bad, he doubles his efforts. This goes the same for most things that Varney puts his mind to, usually fights.

Vice: Lust. He loves to hurt things, to cripple them, to beat them. Any time he can pick on a weaker Undersider with no recourse Varney will have some fun with the poor soul.

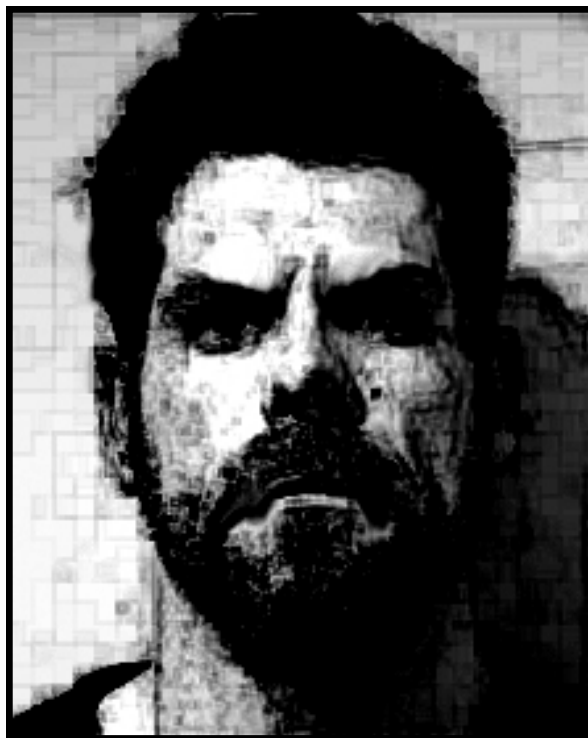
Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Size	Dice Pool
Punch	0(B)	0	7
Nearest Blunt Object	1(B)	1	8
"Lizard" (Varney's Club)	3(B)	2	10



Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Reinforced Leather	1/0	0

Health: 11

Experience Used: 35

Knacks: Varney's Special – Varney must spend 1 Willpower and gains the ability to pick up and use any weapon, improvised or not, while concentrating on it without actually touching it for the scene. The range of this Knack is 20 yards. Varney can make a Weapons attack with his action in this range as if it were a normal attack.



"The heart of another is a dark forest, always, no matter how close it has been to one's own." - Willa Cather

NEXT ISSUE

- World As Myth will look at Jim Henson's Labyrinth movie as set in the World of Darkness. We want ideas! A non-[vampire/werewolf/mage] would be best. The obvious is to create it under the Mage domain, but we want something a little darker and little more original. Send in your ideas to apocryphuswoods@gmail.com , also mention specifically if you want to write your idea for this webzine if it gets picked.
- Rote, rotates, rotates. While I cannot guarantee that more crunch will not slip in, we are going to concentrate heavily on Mage rotates. Please send us any you have created or used in your Mage chronicles.
- New Fiction! Another story to pique your interest and give you more ideas to round out your view of the World of Darkness.
- We are also looking for a columnist. (We tried to get one for the opening issue, but it fell through the cracks.) The column should be musings, ideas, and reviews of White Wolf's World of Darkness line. If you are interested please contact us right away!
- Send us comments. What don't you like? What you do think is awesome? Too long, too short? Good art? Crappy art? Let us know so we can continue to improve future issues of Apocryphus Woods.
- Strange Internet Happenings! I know there will be plenty, especially once more information about the enigmatic 4th (5th?) World of Darkness game is "revealed."
- More columns? We are always open to more suggestions if you feel up to heading a new column. Mysterious places? Stories in the dark? More creativity equals a better fanzine for you!

